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to make him forget the noble bearing which otherwise always distinguished him. The subject was Italian opera; and the name, Rossini. When these were mentioned, Weber, whose glance was so penetrating, whose vision was so good, became blind, and would insist upon remaining so. He purposely closed his ears to beauties which could not in the long run have escaped his notice, had he not obstinately and defiantly been on the watch for defects alone—of which, by the way, there were plenty. But this was perfectly human, and perfectly intelligible. His position as conductor of German Opera in the Dresden of that day renders everything clear. The Italian Opera, with its chief, Morlacchi, was petted up by the Court. The Italian Opera was the cause of Weber's having to suffer patiently many a slight, which he felt the more acutely the sharper the contrast which it offered to the respect with which people all over the world had begun to greet his name, since *Der Freischütz* and *Preciosa* had spread his fame from every stage. The senseless Rossini mania, moreover, devoid of judgment, and frequently in ecstasies with mere empty tinkling, was sometimes so outrageous that even I myself, as a layman, despite all my partiality, for Rossini, felt angry at it. There was no necessity for a man to have studied counterpoint, as Carl Maria had done, under the Abbé Vogler in Darmstadt, with Gottfried Weber and Meyerbeer to be reduced to despair at hearing the roll of the drums from *La Gazza ladra* everlastingly applauded at the Garden Concerts of Linke's Baths, or at listening to the confounded triplets and other dance-figures, in which Benincasa, who was otherwise admirable, and Sassaroli (the bass) represented despair, when, on account of a silver spoon or so that had been stolen, the most noble-minded of all fair cooks was to be executed, instead of a roguish magpie. I am speaking of the year two-and-twenty. At the present day the case is different, and in a Thirty Years' War of criticism against taste we have been taught to perceive Rossini's talent even in his worst mistakes. But Weber would not have anything to do with him.

At this our first meeting, Weber was frequently placed in a quandary by his bitter hatred of Rossini and by his gallantry towards the fair vocalist who owed as much applause to *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *Tancredi*, and *Otello*, as to *Der Freischütz*, and who, consequently, did not appear inclined to agree unconditionally with Weber's half playful, half savage sentences of condemnation. But not to conceal the truth I must state my impression that *Il Barbiere* was one of the exceptions in Weber's *index librorum prohibitorum*, and found grace in his eyes, *quand même*.

Before we left Chiapone's cellar, to go and take another turn in the mild starlight night, a reconciliation had been effected, and Weber affixed the seal to the treaty of peace by inviting us all to dine with him next day.

We shall have to relinquish our beloved old wine "sack," and what will become of the bibulous songs? Somebody has just discovered—confound him—that "sack" is merely an Anglicism for "sec," dry. Dry sherry and dry canary were much prized in the drinking days of yore.

INVOCATION TO DEATH!

Strike if thou wilt, white Death,
I bare my breast!
Thy sharp, swift dart, oh, Death,
Shall give me rest.
Thy grisly hand in mine, gaunt Death,
Shall glad be press'd.

Aweary and faint on Life's path,
Unwillingly pacing its road,
I would fain at Futurity's gate
Cast off my terrestrial load!
Borne down with this burden of life,
Mine eyes ever fixed on the goal,
My wayfarer's staff I'd lay by—
Write my name on Eternity's scroll.
The phantoms of dead joys float round me,
Hope's ashes lie cold on my heart;
Love, friendship, affection evanished!
Oh soul! from my body depart!

Quench thou my torch, cold Death,
No glory in its light remains!
Loosen the silver cord; oh, Death!
Too fiercely doth it gall my reins.
Break thou this bowl of life, quick Death,
It runneth poison in my veins!

Draw thou night's veil, kind Death,
Shut out Life's sun!
Th' eternal doors ope quickly, Death,
My sand is run!
Smite me thou shalt, white Death,
My day is done!

ARTHUR MATTHISON.

TO CHRISTINE NILSSON.

O, Margharita, when upon the stage
Santley impersonates your soldier brother,
And curses you, I fly into a rage,
And feel inclined that baritone to smother.

But when I see my Margaret's lover come,
And hear him utter spooney things, and
when her
Waist he encircles, then it strikes me dumb,
And makes me long to spifficate the tenor.

A Berlin critic complains that Madame Artot sang her rôle in *Trovatore*, in the Italian language, her companions using the German tongue, and cites Roger, the French tenor, who perfected himself in German in all his characters. If our Berlin contemporary lived in this cosmopolitan city he would not so easily be disturbed, although the practice adverted to, is not to be defended for an instant.

Madame Lind Goldschmidt is wintering in the south of France, at Cannes; 'tis said she will probably cease to reside in England, owing to the climate.

The programme for the Handel Festival to be holden at the Crystal Palace, Sydenham, in June, will shortly be issued.

Gounod succeeded after all in accomplishing his aim in visiting Vienna, his opera of *Romeo and Juliet* was brought out in time for him to conduct it.

MADRID.—M. Victorien Sardou's comedy of "Les vieux Garçons," has been produced under the title of "Los Solterones," at the Teatro del Principe, but has not proved very successful. A French company is performing at the Teatro de Variedades.

M. Rubinstein has been playing with more than his usual success at Cologne.

[From the *Neue Berliner Musikzeitung*.]

CARNIVAL-LETTERS ABOUT MUSIC IN VIENNA.

It is now the gay season of masked balls, when people put on masks to tell their acquaintances certain truths; the persons to whom these truths are told laugh and say nothing—because it is Carnival time; at any other period they would look rather glum, nay, perhaps, even consider themselves deeply affronted! So hurrah for the Carnival! I will try to send you a few words about my beloved Viennese, and their musical sayings and doings.

In arch-conservative Berlin people understand just as little about musical as about political matters among us. The Prussians who come here look around in astonishment, unable to make out how we can be so merry; we lost in a sanguinary war great battles, together with a province, which even men of very liberal principles considered, a few years since, very indispensable to the existence of Austria—and every stranger visiting Vienna must expect to find a city plunged in mourning and despondency; he finds instead of this everywhere joyous faces; dancing and amusement of all kinds; and still so much of the old Viennese good nature that a Prussian officer of high rank lately said, in the most friendly manner: "We have conquered provinces by the sword, but the Viennese conquer us by their amiability." Well, now, the same is true of us in music; foreign conquerors have invaded us, Wagner and Wagnerites, Schumann and Schumannites, besides other small prophets of a similar sort; but we old Austrian bodies do not, on that account, make a disturbance; we go to "the old ones," and we go to "the new ones;" if anything by Wagner or by Brahms does not please us, we abuse it; if aught does please us, we applaud it with might and main, priding ourselves, at the same time, on the fact that many classical compositions of our Viennese composers—that Beethoven's works, for instance—are nowhere performed with such spirit and such precision. Then, again, Prussians, Prussian connoisseurs, assert that our Philharmonicists are, in "many things," in the *crescendo* and *decrescendo*, in dash, and so on, really incomparable models, and that our *Männergesang* Associations are unrivalled. On the other hand, however, we must submit to be told that we are very far behind in our study of Bach; that our oratorios cannot bear any comparison with those at Berlin; that classical music is to be heard in every garden-arbor of that capital, and so on. *Suum cuique*.

I must first make some observations upon music among us generally, before going into details. Among all the natives of Southern Germany, the Viennese is distinguished for the greatest susceptibility to music, a susceptibility which would not, perhaps, suffer from a slight addition of reflection now and then, but which, at any rate, is advantageous to the musician, inasmuch as he does not appear before a public previously prejudiced against him. The numerous secondary considerations elsewhere brought into play at the first appearance of an artist do not exert the slightest influence among us; on the contrary, somewhat too much importance is attached to the fact of momentary success. The easy-going Viennese is fond of abandoning himself to the momentary impressions produced by a fine performance, with-